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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/654,951	09/05/2000	Robert A. Cordery	F-100	7627

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EXAMINER

CHEUNG, MARY DA ZHI WANG

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3621

DATE MAILED: 09/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/654,951

Applicant(s)

CORDERY ET AL.

Examiner

Mary Cheung

Art Unit

3621

new

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 June 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Claims

1. This action is in response to the amendment filed on June 28, 2004. Claims 1-32 are pending. Claims 29-32 are newly added.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed June 28, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references of Abumehdi (U. S. Patent 5,367,464) and Sharrow (U. S. Patent 6,061,668), the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, Abumehdi teaches a central terminal maintains transactions data from plurality of modules.

In response to applicant's arguments that Abumehdi in view of Sharrow does not teach the claimed limitations, examiner believes that these references have been reasonably combined and interpreted to match the claims.

Furthermore, examiner has pointed out particular references contained in the prior arts of record in the body of this action for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are

Art Unit: 3621

applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant, in preparing the response, to consider fully the entire references as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior arts or disclosed by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 1-6, 8-20 and 22-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abumehdi et al., U. S. Patent 5,367,464 in view of Sharrow, U. S. Patent 6,061,668.

Art Unit: 3621

As claims 1, 15 and 29, Abumehdi teaches a method and a system for auditing a database comprising a plurality of records, said records each being accessible through at least one or two of a plurality of independent modules, said method comprising the steps of (abstract and Figs. 1; *specifically, "a plurality of independent modules" corresponds to the plurality of franking machines 10₁-10_n as shown in Figure 1*):

- a) Maintaining a set of additive audit data in each said modules (column 4 line 64 – column 5 line 54 and Fig. 1);
- b) Controlling said modules so that each module increments a set of audit data maintained in said module when a record is accessed through said module (Figs. 1-3B);
- c) Summing audit data in each module to generate system audit data (column 5 lines 19-54 and Fig. 1);
- d) Verifying said database's integrity against said system audit data (column 5 lines 26-32 and Figs. 3A-3B).

Abumehdi does not specifically teach that the system audit data is generated by summing the audit data of each of said modules. However, Sharrow teaches summing sets of audit data of each of the plurality of modules to generate system audit data, and verifying the database's integrity against the system audit data (column 3 lines 24-30 and column 5 lines 46-54 and column 7 lines 20-24 and Figs. 1, 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add the features of summing the audit data of each of said modules to generate the system audit data, and verifying the database's integrity against the system audit data in

Art Unit: 3621

Abumehdi's teaching because this would increase the overall consistency of all the modules.

As to claims 2, 9, 16 and 24, Abumehdi teaches sending a user request for access to a record and said request record to a selected one of said modules; and said selected module updating said requested record in accordance with said request (column 5 line 19-54 and Fig. 1).

As to claims 3, 17 and 23, Abumehdi teaches said selected module incorporates encrypted information in said record to prevent generation of fraudulent records (Figs. 2A-3B).

As to claims 4, 10 and 20, Abumehdi teaches a request for a digital postal indicium and comprises controlling said selected module to generate and return to said requesting user a digital postal indicium in accordance with said request; and controlling said selected module to update said request record in accordance with said request (column 1 lines 17-21 and column 2 lines 37-47 and column 5 lines 19-54 and Figs. 2A-2C).

As to claims 5 and 18, Abumehdi teaches said selected module incorporates encrypted information in said audit data to authenticate said audit data (Figs. 2A-2C).

As to claims 6 and 19, Abumehdi teaches auditing a database as discussed above. Abumehdi does not specifically teach the selected module incorporates time information in said audit data. However, Sharrow teaches a selected module incorporates time information in the audit data (column 5 lines 58-65). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to

Art Unit: 3621

allow the selected module in Abumehdi's teaching to include time information in the audit data so that the system can better monitor each transaction.

As to claims 8, and 22, increments of a linear error correction code for correcting a field of said records, whereby said audit data can be summed to generate a system error correcting code to correct said field of said records are taught by Abumehdi as the audit data goes through error detection check, and if errors are detected, the audit data will be corrected (column 5 lines 27-32).

As to claims 11-12 and 25-26, Abumehdi teaches the corrected field contains a total postage amount or a total number of indicia dispensed for the corresponding record (column 5 lines 15-54).

As to claims 13 and 27, said sets of audit data comprises arithmetic totals for values stored in said field of said records, whereby arithmetic sums of said values across said modules can be compared with arithmetic sums across said records, whereby numbers of errors greater than the number which can be detected by said system error correcting code can be detected are taught by Abumehdi as the audit data comprises arithmetic totals for values stored in said field of said records, whereby arithmetic sums of said values across said modules can be compared with arithmetic sums across said records, the audit data goes through error detection check, and if errors are detected, the audit data will be corrected (column 5 lines 27-54).

As to claims 14 and 28, Abumehdi teaches the field contains a total postage amount or a total number of indicia dispensed (column 5 lines 15-54).

Art Unit: 3621

As to claim 30, Abumehdi teaches controlling said modules so that each module sends a copy of audit data maintained in said module to a server after a record is accessed through said module (column 5 line 49 – column 6 line 28 and Fig. 1).

As to claim 31, Abumehdi teaches summing said sets of audit data utilizes at least one set of the copy audit data maintained on the server (column 5 line 19 – column 6 line 28 and Fig. 1).

As to claim 32, controlling said modules so that each module updates an error correcting code after a record is accessed through said module is taught by Abumehdi as the audit data goes through error detection check, and if errors are detected, the audit data will be corrected (column 5 lines 27-32).

6. Claims 7 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abumehdi et al., U. S. Patent 5,367,464 in view of Sharrow, U. S. Patent 6,061,668 in further view of Kara et al., U. S. Patent 5,778,076.

As to claims 7 and 21, Abumehdi modified by Sharrow teaches auditing a database as discussed above. Abumehdi modified by Sharrow does not specifically teach providing security against tampering. However, Kara teaches providing security against tampering (column 15 lines 16-20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to allow the method of Abumehdi modified by Sharrow to include the feature of against tempering because user would feel confident to make transactions via the system.

Conclusion

7. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Art Unit: 3621

Inquire

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mary Cheung whose telephone number is (703)-305-0084. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday – Thursday from 10:00 AM to 7:30 PM. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Trammell, can be reached on (703) 305-9768.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.

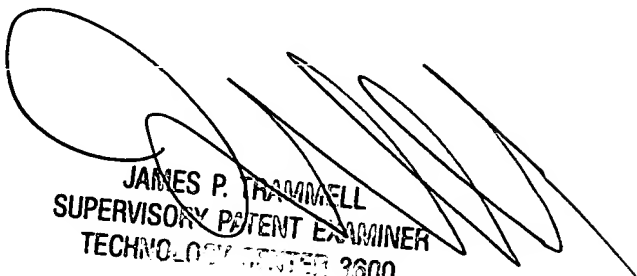
The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceedings is assigned are as follows:

(703) 872-9306 (Official Communications; including After Final
Communications labeled "BOX AF")

(703) 746-5619 (Draft Communications)

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Plaza Two, Room 1B03.

Mary Cheung
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3621
September 17, 2004


JAMES P. TRAMMELL
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